Benefits of I.T. to Rural Area

†182. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether there is any scheme to provide benefits of Information Technology to rural areas;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) Whether Government are aware that more than 90 per cent population of the country do not understand English language and therefor, these people can be provided with the benefit of this technology through Hindi and regional languages; and

(d) if so, the steps Government have taken to develop, propagate and popularise the Information Technology in Hindi language ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A number of projects/schemes are being implemented and some new schemes are being launched by the Government for the development of Information Technology in Rural Areas. Details are given in the enclosed Statement. (*See* below)

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) There is TDIL (Technology Development for Indian Languages) programme of Department of Information Technology to promote development of requisite technologies to facilitate use of Hindi and other Indian languages in various IT products and services. Especially for promoting IT in Hindi speaking States, COIL Net (Content Development and Localisation Solutions) project has been initiated. Information about language technologies thus developed are disseminated through the website http://tdil.mit.gov. in and the Newsletter VishwaBharat @tdil.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Statement

Schemes currently in operation for Development of Information Technology in Rural Area

1. *Samadhan Kendra*

A project for Village Information Centre (Samadhan Kendra) was initiated in 1997-98, by DIT to bring IT intervention in Rural India. Under the project a Village Information Centre was set up in Ramanathapuram District of Tamilnadu after extensive study of the demography crops, animal husbandry and other related issues of the region. A number of packages to satisfy the information needs of the rural people were developed. The Samadhan Kendra is currently in operation and is being used extensively. The project is implemented by an NGO Centre for Ecology Research and Development, Pondicherry. The total cost is Rs. 15.48 lacs.

Seeing the success of this project, DIT had initiated three more pilot projects :

(a) Madhya Pradesh—being implemented by National Centre for Human Settlement & Environment (NCHSE), Bhopal at the total cost of Rs. 15.47 lacs. The project site is Ujjain.

(b) Madhya Pradesh—being implemented by Mahatma Gandhi Chitrakoot Gramoday Vishwa Vidyalay, Chitrakoot at the total cost of Rs. 17.64 lacs.

(c) Andhra Pradesh—being implemented by Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT), Hyderabad a CSIR based organization at the total cost of Rs. 22.34 lacs.

2. *IT Applications in Agriculture*

Following projects are being implemented in order to promote IT Application in agriculture operation :

(a) Multimedia Software for Implementation of available Agriculture Technologies for various crops being implemented by Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vishwa Vidyalaya (JNKVV), Jabalpur at the total cost of Rs. 29.66 lacs.

(b) Modernisation of model tea factory and development of Integrated Automation of tea processing being implemented by Tea Research Association (TRA), Electronics Research and Development Centre of India (ER&DCI), Kolkata and Central Electronic Engineering Research Institution (CEERI), Pilani at the total cost of Rs. 357.69 lacs.

3. *National Informatics Centre*

NIC is providing computer based support to the Central Government departments, State Governments, District Administrations and other Government bodies in the country. NIC is developing and implementing information system in Hindi and in local languages as required by the user departments. Necessary technological tools required in this regard are provided by NIC. A major example is the Land Records computerisation which has been implemented in local languages in the respective states.

4. *Media Lab Asia*

Media Lab Asia has been jointly set up in September 2001 in Mumbai by the Ministry of Communications & Information Technology (then Ministry of Information Technology) and MIT USA. The salient features of the project are development of state-of-the-art and future technologies and deployment of these technologies especially Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) for the benefit of the common man including the rural masses. The objective is to help bridge the digital divide by taking information technology to the masses and thus empowering them. The thrust areas of work include health, education and micro-entrepreneurship. Media Lab Asia is centered around a large network of village level projects. The role of the Media Lab Asia is to facilitate the invention, refinement and dissemination of innovations that benefit the masses. The Media Lab Asia is working with industry, NGOs and Government to bring these innovations to villages in India.

The initial phase of one year has been approved with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 65.0 Crore from Government of India.

5. *Community Information Centres (CIC) Project*

The Department of Information Technology has undertaken a scheme for setting up Community Information Centres (CICs) at 487 block headquarters in the seven North-East states and Sikkim for promoting application of Information Technology for accelerating socio-economic development of the region. The scheme is expected to be implemented within two years in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

(a) The project is mainly aimed and bridging the digital divide and providing connectivity at the grass root level particularly in those areas where the benefits of national development have not reached the community, specially woman and children to the desired extent as they have all along been deprived of access to information relevant to their needs.

(b) The CIC project which is a pioneering scheme of the Government of India is intended to meet the requirements of the community located at inconvenient hilly terrain, inaccessible and remote area in a cost effective manner.

(c) The pilot project for setting up 30 CICs at block headquarters at sites selected by the state Governments was completed in October, 2000 at an estimated cost of Rs. 15 crores projected over a five year period.

(d) Based on the experiences of the functioning of 30 CICs under the pilot project, the main project is launched involving an estimated expenditure of Rs. 242 crores (including the cost of pilot project of 15 crores).

(e) An amount of Rs. 85.35 crores has been released so far to National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (NICSI) for implementing the project.